CORRESPONDENCE

Duplicate Binomials

For over one hundred and fifty years the American Philosophical Society "held at Philadelphia" has been engaged in the laudable task of "promoting useful knowledge"; and, on the whole it must be admitted that its efforts have been crowned with success. What must be the surprise, however, of botanists and zoölogists everywhere when they learn of the latest proposition contained in the proceedings of this ancient body. On pages 263 and 264 of the current volume, "printed Aug. 7, 1903," we are favored with a contribution from the pen of an Italian scientist, the burden of which is indicated by the following quotations:

"In my note . . . published in the Bulletin of the Italian Malàcological Society (Vol. x, 1884), I have proposed to retain the original Linnean names for the species, though this may have been chosen to denote the genus. For instance, the name of *Mya vulsella* L. . . . has been changed in *Vulsella lingulata.* The name of *Ostrea malleus* L. has been changed in *Malleus vulgaris* Lamk. I have proposed in similar cases to retain the original name of the species. . . . So I have proposed to call these species *Vulsella vulsella* (L.), *Malleus malleus* (L.). My proposition has been accepted by many malacologists. . . . I think that this modification might be conveniently adopted also for plants as well as animals. . . . I call the attention of zoölogists and botanists to this interesting innovation." [!]

Perhaps it is expecting too much of an Italian malacologist that he should be informed of the current usage of many American botanists, or even American zoölogists; perhaps he could not be expected to be familiar with Karsten's Deutsche Flora (1880–1883), with its eighty duplicate binomials (*Amelanchier Amelanchier*, *Archangelica Archangelica*, *Aruncus Aruncus*, *Batatas Batatas*, *Bellidiastrum Bellidiastrum*, *Calamagrostis Calamagrostis*, *Calamintha Calamintha*, *Camphora Camphora*, *Canella Canella*, etc.), or with Hill's Hortus Kewensis, published during the lifetime of Linnaeus, in which occur the names *Calcitrapa Calci-*

trapa, Cyanus Cyanus, Mariana Mariana, Rhapontica Rhapontica, and others of a similar character. But it must be a matter of surprise that the recent literature of botany and zoölogy is so slightly regarded (or so wholly inaccessible?) at Philadelphia; it seems, however, as if even there they must have a copy of the Century Dictionary, and if they consulted it might find the statement that the common European lynx is *Lynx Lynx!*

There has been much discussion among both zoölogists and botanists about the desirability of using duplicate binomials, and there are still many who object to scientific names which are as meaningless as "cat cat" or "dog dog," but the use of such appears to be extending in spite of objections, and they are no more devoid of meaning than many other binomials in common use.

While upon this subject, it may not be amiss to call the attention of botanical students to the fact that many duplicate binomials were proposed by A. B. Lyons in 1900, in his little book entitled "Plant names, scientific and popular"; a work which might readily be overlooked as a source of new combinations.

John Hendley Barnhart.

NEWS ITEMS

John L. Sheldon, Ph.D. (University of Nebraska, 1903), has been appointed professor of bacteriology in the West Virginia University at Morgantown.

Dr. and Mrs. N. L. Britton returned to New York on September 18 from Cuba, where they had spent three weeks in botanical exploration.

Mr. C. B. Robinson, B.A. (Dalhousie, 1891), of Pictou, Nova Scotia, has been appointed a laboratory assistant at the New York Botanical Garden.

Mr. Edmund P. Sheldon, now of Portland, Oregon, is superintendent of the Oregon State forestry exhibit at the World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904.

Professor L. M. Underwood returned from Europe on September 7. While abroad he visited herbaria at Kew, Berlin, Prague, Basel, Geneva, Paris, etc.